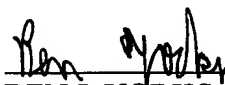


Green and Jackson. Independent claims 1 and 11 recite a heart stabilizer that is held by a jaw member of an end effector without actuation of any fasteners. Claim 16 recites a method where the end effector is secured to a support arm by merely retracting and releasing a jaw member. Both Green and Dobrovoly (item 118 in Fig. 13 of Green) and (item 90 of Dobrovoly) both show knobs that must be turned to clamp down the heart stabilizer. This is to be distinguished from the invention disclosed and claimed which includes a spring that allows for a quick release of the heart stabilizer. Such quick release allows for the insertion and removal of a heart stabilizer without actuating a fastener. Jackson does not teach or suggest to modify either Green or Dobrovoly to include a quick release mechanism. Jackson merely discloses a biasing spring for a pair of pliers. For these reasons the applicant submits that the prior art does not render obvious the present claimed invention.

In view of the above it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejection is requested. Allowance of claims 1, 2, 4-12 and 14-20 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
IRELL & MANELLA LLP

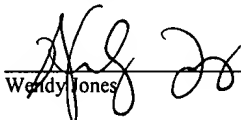
Dated: March 25, 2003


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Wendy Jones
3/25/03
Date

APPENDIX

IN THE CLAIMS

Claims 1, 11 and 16 have been amended as follows.

1 1. (Twice Amended) A support arm assembly, comprising:
2 a table mount;
3 an arm coupled to said table mount;
4 an end effector coupled to said arm, said end effector having a jaw member coupled to
5 a[with an adjustable] spring [force]; and,
6 a heart stabilizer held by said jaw member of said end effector without actuation of
7 any fasteners.

1 11. (Twice Amended) A support arm assembly, comprising:
2 a table mount adapted to be secured to the table;
3 a first linkage coupled to said table mount;
4 a second linkage pivotally coupled to said first linkage;
5 a third linkage pivotally coupled to said second linkage;
6 an end effector pivotally coupled to said third linkage and having a jaw member
7 coupled to a[with an adjustable] spring [force]; and,
8 a heart stabilizer held by said jaw member of said end effector without actuation of
9 any fasteners.

1 16. (Amended) A method for coupling a heart stabilizer to a table, comprising:
2 mounting a support arm to the table;
3 adjusting a position of an end effector of the support arm, the end effector having a
4 retractable jaw member; [and;]
5 retracting the jaw member;
6 inserting a heart stabilizer into the end effector; and;
7 releasing the jaw member to secure the end effector to the support arm.
8 [coupling the heart stabilizer to an end effector of the support arm.]